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The NatureKenya Newsletter www.naturekenya.org June 04

IN THE HOUSE
Books

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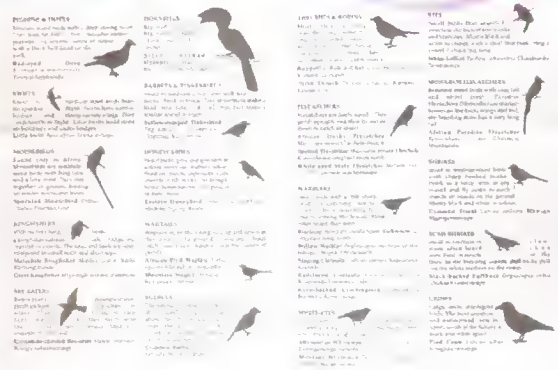
Just published by Nature Kenya's **Environmental Legislation and Policy Working Group**, and available at only *200/-* from the Nature Kenya office.



CHECKLIST OF THE COMMON BIRDS OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM GROUNDS, NAIROBI

Featuring outline drawings and thumbnail descriptions of 29 bird families, and names of common species in English, Swahili and Latin.

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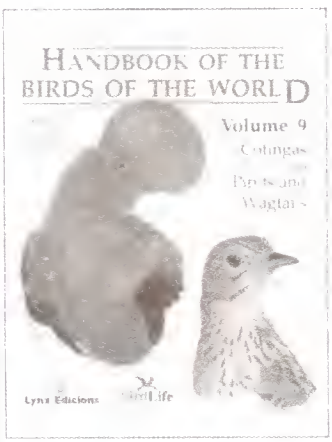

HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF THE WORLD - VOLUME 9

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OR EMAIL: lynx@hbw.com

** Purchase the Forests Bill, 2004 published at the end of April - details on page 4*

TALKS & VIDEOS
Botanical diversity of Taita Hills

An Illustrated talk

by Geoffrey Mwachala

Mon 7 June '03,
5:30 p.m. Ford Hall, National Museums, Nairobi

The Taita Hills are part of the Eastern Arc Mountains. These are ancient crystalline mountains that haye been in existence some 50 million years. They are distinguished with at least 15 endemic taxa, nine of which are plants, with more being discovered all the time.

Since 1997, Geoffrey Mwachala, Geoffrey Mungai and Beatrice Khayota of the National Museums of Kenya have led teams of volunteers in documenting botanical diversity in the transition zone (800-1250 m above sea level) on the Taita Hills.

Geoffrey Mwachala will share with you their experiences and interesting finds.

FIELD TRIP
Lake Solai

Sat 26 (2:00 P.M.) – Sun 27 June 04

Lake Solai is a seasanal lake in Nakuru District abaut 50 kms fram Nakuru. On Saturday we will travel to Flaminga Camp, situated an the Nairabi-Nakuru highway where we shall camp overnight and praceed for Lake Salai the fallawing day.

Nature Kenya members will be able to camp far free (A big THANK YOU to Flaminga Camp), came with yaur membership card and camping gear. Tailets and hat water shawers available and security is pravided. Book at the Nature Kenya frant affice by 22 June, with 150/- per person, and meet at the National Museum car park an Saturday 26 June at 2:00 p.m.

GRASSROOTS

Nature East Africa

Volume 34 1, 2004

This issue, which comes to you with this newsletter, is a special issue focussing on the Nature Kenya's conservation work, involving networking and monitoring among Site Support Groups.

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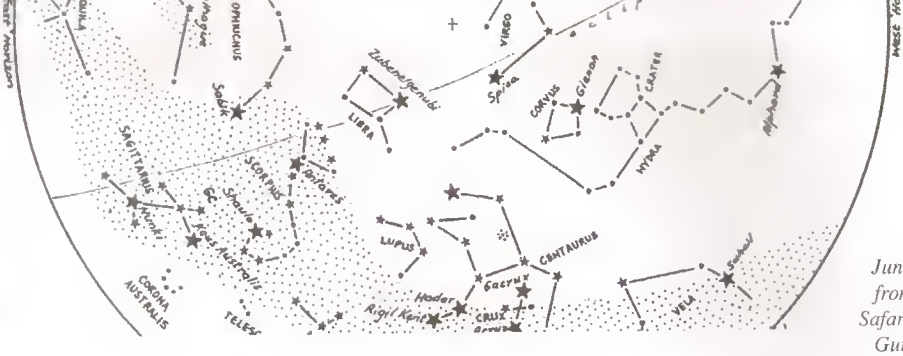

June Sky, from The Safari Star Guide by Alex and Joy MacKay

EVENING SKY

By Ian MacKay and Fleur Ng'weno

June Stars

Ursa Major, also called the Plough or the Big Dipper, is a large constellation in the north. Four stars form the corners of a box, and three stars in a line stretch away from the box.

Higher in the northern sky is the brilliant orange star Arcturus. Higher still, the blue-white star Spica is directly overhead. (The bright planet Jupiter is also overhead, a little to the west.)

The Southern Cross is upright in the south. Two very bright stars in the constellation Centaur seem to point to the Southern Cross. The constellation Scorpius is rising in the east; look for its fiery eye, the reddish star Antares.

Planets, June 04

Saturn is only visible in the early evening, setting in the west soon after the sun. Mars is above Saturn in the western sky, less bright than Saturn. Jupiter can be seen throughout the evening, setting much later at around midnight,

There will be a transit of Venus on June 8th. The orbit of Venus around the sun passes between the sun and the orbit of the Earth. And on June 8th, the planet will pass directly between the sun and us for a few hours. Astronomers viewing it through protective equipment will see it as a small black disk crawling very slowly across the brilliant face of the sun.

The most recent transits of Venus occurred in 1874 and 1882, the next ones will be in 2012, and after a longer interval, 2117. There are some interesting stories surrounding past transits: A French astronomer called Lengentil journeyed to the Far East to see the transit of 1761, however the expedition was delayed by wars, and he wos forced to watch it from the deck of a ship, and was therefore unable to record any useful information. Not to be daunted, he stayed abroad for 8 more years to catch the next one in 1769, but as it often seems to be when people try to watch such important celestial events, the weather was cloudy so he saw nothing! Meanwhile, the first epic voyage of the explorer Captain Cook had taken him and his astronomical observers to Tahiti in the South Pacific, where they made exact measurements with more success.

Moon

June 3rd *Full Moon*; June 9th *Last quarter*; June 17th *New Moon*; June 25th *First quarter*.

And, using the moon to find the stars and planets: June 3rd - Antares just south of the moon; June 19th - Saturn south of moon; June 20th - Mars o little south of moon, June 24th - Jupiter south of moon.

Sun

On June 21st the Sun is as far north as it gets. This marks the winter solstice for us south of the equator.

An American Indian religious leader, Arvol Looking Horse, is calling on people everywhere to gather at sacred sites on the solstice, 21 June, as a day of peace ond prayer.

CLASSIFIEDS

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REGULAR ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, **i.e.20 June**. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

TREE WALK

Guided Tree Walks in the Arboretum on the second Saturday and last Monday, i.e. **12 & 28 June from 9:30 a.m.** Meet at the Arboretum gate. *Those who are not members of FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.*

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. *Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.*

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. **5 June, at 6:30 a.m.** from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person. KWS fees may now apply (100/- Citizens, 500/- Residents)

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month, i.e. **19 June** Please call Marlene Reid on (041) 491 648 to confirm

Ngong Road Forest Walks (Nairobi)

The Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust Nature walks are held on the first and third Saturdays of the month i.e. **5 & 19 November, at 9:00 a.m.** Meet at the stairs leading to the Restaurant at the Racecourse.

Lake Victoria Sunset Birders (Kisumu)

The Lake Victoria Sunset Birders are a Nature Kenya Site Support Group and organise bird walks at sites in and around Kisumu every Friday of the month. For further details call 035 42952 or email wck@vicweb.net

DECLARATION

Nature Kenya does not accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence of any of its staff, volunteers or members organising the outings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.

Editor, Catherine Ngarachu

Bird Hotline (April Sightings) 3749957

Common Button-quoil, Northern Grosbeak Canory *Mpala Ranch* Shailesh Patel & Bernard Chege

Greater Pointed-snipe, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Zebro Woxbill ond Africon Morsh Horrier *Mwea Rice field* Nature Kenya Field trip

Amur Falcons, Violet-tipped Coursers *Tsavo East Natianal Park* Duncan Himes

Scoly-throoted Honeyguide *Laresha* Wednesday Morning Birdwalk

Pollid Honeyguide *Mt.Suswa* Nature Kenya Field trip

Wohlberg's Honeybird KARI *Kathumani, Machakas* Sunday Birdwalk

MAMMAL SIGHTING

Lesser (Rufous) Elephont Shrew *Mpala Research Centre* Shailesh Patel

Striped Ground Squirrel *City Park, Parklands, Nairabi* Wednesday Morning Birdwalk

OTHER SIGTHINGS

Short-necked Skink, Kenyo Dworf Gecko *Mpala Research Centre* Shailesh Patel

Speke's Sond Lizord *Mpala Ranch* Shailesh Patel

Bird Database naming competition overleaf

JUNE DIARY

Sat 5	ASF Birdwalks & NRF walk
Mon 7	Taita Hills talk
Sat 12	Tree Walk
Sun 20	Sunday Birdwalk
Sat 26 & Sun 27	L. Solai trip
Mon 28	Tree Walk

Birdwalks every Wednesday Morning

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Suggest a NAME and WIN a bird book!

Ornithologists, birdwatchers, tourists and bird tours all gather masses of information on birds and store it in personal notepads or in trip reports that remain unseen or unpublished. This is 'lost' information that could make an important contribution to the global understanding of nature and birds.

BirdLife International is planning to set up a web-based World Bird Database. This will be a great source of easily submittable and accessible information to use for monitoring, analysis of trends, updating atlases on bird distribution, etc.

Birdwatchers prepared to input their own personal observations through a user-friendly Web page will help to produce a vast dataset of bird sightings around the globe, and will be able to participate in the conservation of their natural heritage at a variety of different levels.

With the powerful analytical tools that this project aims to provide, everyone will be able to:

- Produce distribution maps of species, showing where each is most frequently encountered.
- Plan birdwatching trips in their own and other countries
- Access and contribute to definitive and complete lists of bird species at all important sites
- Increase their chances of seeing a particular species at a particular site.
- Manage their own records to produce day, year and life lists, summary statistics and maps
- Help to identify and monitor areas of conservation priority
- Help to monitor the populations of all species

There is a prototype that is up and running and ready for some general testing. In order for it to be attractive on the Internet, we are now looking for a name for the Kenya system. Nature Kenya is launching it as a competition for its members.

Members are invited to submit a name for the Kenya part of the World Bird Database by the end of July 2004. Send your suggestions to "Name for Bird Database" at Nature Kenya.

The Bird Committee of the East Africa Natural History Society at their August meeting will review the proposed names. The winning suggestion will get a copy of one of the following bird books: *Birds of East Africa/ Field Guide to the Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania* (hard cover) or *Birds of Africa South of the Sahara*.

GRASSROOTS

The Forests Bill, 2004

The Forests Bill, 2004, was published at the end of April. The 2004 Bill follows much of the spirit and wording of the 2000 draft, approved at a Stakeholders' workshop in 2000.

The Forests Bill, 2004, proposes a Kenya Forest Service, with a disciplined force, to replace the current Forest Department. There would be a Director of Forests, a governing Board, and Forest Conservation Committees in different parts of the country. The Bill reflects current management priorities, and includes opportunities for participation in forest management by communities, the private sector, and other government and non-government bodies.

Copies of the Forests Bill, 2004, are available at Ksh.250/- each from
The Government Printer's Bookshop
Haile Selassie Avenue
PO Box 3128, Nairobi 00100
Phone (020) 226596

"We urge all Members of Parliament to enact this Bill to guide Kenya to a better future." Paul Matiku, Executive Director, Nature Kenya

Nature *Kenya*

Membership form

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